



June 25, 2004

Fourteen agencies share in \$305,000 from a real estate forfeiture resulting from a Coventry marijuana cultivation

Fourteen federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies have shared in \$305,430 in proceeds from the forfeiture of Coventry property belonging to **George Giusti**, who is serving a 41 month federal prison sentence for marijuana trafficking, possession of illegal explosives and theft of electricity. Giusti forfeited his landscaping business property at 2885 Flat River Road and his interest in his home at 3 Osprey Drive because he used them to facilitate marijuana cultivation.

The Office of the United States Attorney, United States Marshal Burton Stallwood, and William J. Hoover, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Boston Field Office, jointly announced the awarding of the equitable shares.

Receiving shares of the proceeds of the forfeiture:

ATF	\$140,115.85	Johnston Police	12,713.51
Central Falls Police	12,713.51	Newport Police	12,713.51
Coventry Police	12,789.87	North Providence Police	12,713.51
East Providence Police	12,713.51		

Pawtucket Police	\$12,713.51
Providence Police	12,713.51
R.I. Airport Police	12,713.51
R.I. Attorney General	12,713.51
R.I. Fire Marshal	12,598.97
Warwick Police	12,713.51
Woonsocket Police	12,787.97

Equitable shares of forfeiture proceeds are apportioned according to an agency's contribution to an investigation. Equitable sharing funds derived from criminal asset forfeiture

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can be used for a variety of law enforcement purposes to supplement an agency's budget. Allowable uses include the purchase of equipment, overtime, and investigative expenses.

In December 2002, Giusti pleaded guilty to federal charges of possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, possession of Class B explosives by a previously convicted felon, and taking electricity by fraud. In March 2003, Chief U.S. District Court Judge Ernest C. Torres sentenced Giusti to 41 months in federal prison and ordered him to repay Narragansett Electric \$95,120.41 for electricity Giusti had fraudulently obtained through illegal meter bypasses.

A multi-agency investigation in July 2002 that started as a probe into illegal fireworks revealed a marijuana cultivation operation at Giusti's home and business, Diamond Landscaping. After agents seized Class B explosives from a shed outside Giusti's home, they found marijuana at the

home and cultivating rooms and plants at Diamond Landscaping. Utility workers found illegal bypasses that circumvented the electric meters at both the home and the business.

In addition to bringing criminal charges against Giusti, the United States Attorney filed a civil forfeiture complaint against the home and business properties, alleging that they were forfeitable to the government because they were used to facilitate drug trafficking. Giusti ceded his interest in both properties to the government. To assume sole ownership of the home, which was valued at \$420,000, Giusti's wife, Margaret Giusti, paid the government \$210,000, which represented her husband's 50% ownership. The U.S. Marshals Service liquidated the business property.

The total net value of the forfeiture was \$384,290, of which \$305,429.76 was distributed to the agencies that participated in the investigation.

Contact: 401-528-5224 E-mail:
thomas.connell@usdoj.gov